

# **CURD AND PSYCHE,**

**MYTHOLOGICAL TALE,**

**FROM THE**

# **GOLDEN ASS OF APULEIUS.**

*Illustrated Novel told in English & Latin.*

*3 vols. in 1. £1.50.*



**LONDON:**

**CHARLES J. WRIGHT, OPPONTE OLD BOND-STREET,  
PICCADILLY.**

**1700.**

17...795

## ERRATA.

Page 18, line 3, for *shall*, read *shalt*.

20, l. 12, dele ?

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## CUPID & PSYCHE.

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### I.

O STAY those tears! the beldam cries,  
Ill dreams good fortunes oft forerun,  
Like clouds which skirt the morning skies,  
But melt before the noon-day sun.

Chase from thy soul this idle grief,  
And let my words thine ear engage;  
Thy fears perchance may find relief,  
E'en from the garrulous tales of age.

### II.

Once stately reign'd a king and queen,  
As bards of other times have told,  
The happiest that were ever seen  
To flourish in the days of old.

Three daughters bles'd their nuptial bed ;  
Two daughters exquisitely fair,  
Who many a fond youth captive led ;  
Made many a hapless youth despair.

The youngest—but no tongue so warm,  
Though matchless eloquence be given,  
May dare pourtray her finish'd form,  
The primest of the works of heaven !

Say, to delight the wondering earth,  
Does she amongst us mortals roam,  
Who from the blue deep took her birth,  
Her nurture from the sparkling foam ?

O'er her warm cheek's vermillion dye  
Waves, lightly waves, her dark brown hair ;  
Bright as the winter star her eye,  
Yet peaceful as the summer air.

No one to Paphos takes his way,  
 Cnidos, Cythera, charm no more ;  
 No throngs with votive chaplets gay,  
 Th' *immortal VENUS* now adore.

*Her* temples all in ruin lie,  
 Her altars cold, to dust resign'd,  
 Her withering garlands flap, and fly,  
 And rustle in the hollow wind.

Whilst on the mortal maid they shower  
 The offerings they to her should bring,  
 And offer to this fairer flower  
 The fairest flow'rets of the spring.

To her young girls their wishes breathe,  
 Commend the fond youth to her care ;  
 Bind round her brows the rosy wreath,  
 And figh to her the ardent prayer.

## III.

**P**arent of nature, nurse of joy,  
 From whom the elements arise ;  
**T**hou to whom Ida's Shepherd boy  
 Rightly adjug'd the golden prize,

**O VENUS !** will thy better part,  
 Immortal love, incline to spare ;  
 Or female envy taint thy heart,  
 And plant the Fiend of Vengeance there ?

**V**ENUS has called her winged child,  
 And with malignant pleasure laugh'd,  
**T**hat boy who lawless, wicked, wild,  
 At random aims the flaming shaft.

**H**e who all deeds of darkness owns,  
 Who breaks so oft the nuptial tye,  
 And whilst his luckless victim groans,  
 On careless pinions flutters by.—

The dangerous power, to PSYCHE's bower  
 She with vindictive fury led,  
 And bade him thus his vengeance shower  
 On the detested virgin's head:—

“ By a mother's sacred name,  
 “ By thine arrows tipp'd with flame,  
 “ By thy joys which often borrow  
 “ Of Despair most bitter sorrow,  
 “ Make thy parent's rival know  
 “ Unimaginable woe!  
 “ May she love without return,  
 “ May her senseless passion burn  
 “ For some wretch of abject birth,  
 “ Wandering outcast of the earth;  
 “ Be for him her fond heart torn,  
 “ May e'en he her torments scorn,  
 “ That all womankind may see  
 “ What it is to injure me.  
 “ Make thy parent's rival know  
 “ Unimaginable woe! ”

Then

Then kis'd her son, and fleet as wind  
 She seeks old Ocean's dark green caves—  
 Her ivory feet with roses twin'd  
 Brush lightly o'er the trembling waves.

## IV.

Young PSYCHE still more beauteous grows,  
 She seems unconscious of her charms ;  
 Yet no one plucks this opening rose,  
 She takes no suitor to her arms.

Each sister shines a regal bride,  
 In sweet connubial union blest ;  
 Each moves conspicuous in the pride  
 Of sceptred state and ermin'd vest.

But PSYCHE owns no lawful lord,  
 She walks a goddess from above ;  
 All saw, all prais'd, and all ador'd,  
 But no one ever dar'd to love.

Yet

Yet half-form'd wishes still will ply  
 With feverish dreams th' unpractis'd mind,  
 When 'the clos'd eye, unknowing why,'  
 Its wonted slumbers fails to find.

Though the blank heart no passion owns,  
 Some soft ideas will intrude,  
 And the sick girl in silence moans  
 Her dull unvaried solitude!

## V.

Her father sees his darling's grief,  
 Suspects the jealous wrath of heaven,  
 Hopes from the Oracle relief,  
 And asks the fate the Gods had given.

" On the mountain summit laid  
 " In her grave-clothes be the maid.  
 " Never shall thine eyes behold  
 " Son in law of mortal mould;

“ But a monster girt with wings,  
 “ Fiercest of created things,  
 “ Scattering flames his hours employing,  
 “ Heaven alike and earth annoying :  
 “ Him the dread decrees of fate  
 “ Decline for thy daughter’s mate.””

Graceful his silver tresses flow—

He does not rend his hoary hair,  
 He utters not the shriek of woe,  
 Nor vents the curses of despair ;

He does not wring his aged hands,  
 No tear drop fills his frozen eye ;  
 But as a statue fix’d he stands  
 In speechless, senseless agony !

## VI.

'Tis hard to force its better part  
 From the distraught soul away ;  
 But heaven decrees—man's bursting heart  
 In vain repines—he must obey !

Now rose the inauspicious morn,  
 Mantling in clouds the low'ring skies,  
 When from her parents must be torn  
 The victim of the Destinies.

Loud wailings fill the troubled air,  
 Cold tremors every heart affai!,  
 And the low murmurs of despair  
 Ride fullon on the hollow gale.

Onward the sad procession goes :  
 Do wedding guests then creep so slow ?  
 Say, is it from the bridemaid flows  
 The long and sable train of woe ?

And who are they, who rob'd in white,  
 Their black funereal torches wave,  
 Which shed around such pale blue light  
 As issues from the dead man's grave?

They are the bridal train—yet mark,  
 They carol loud with tuneful breath:  
 'Tis not the song of marriage—hark!  
 They slowly chant the dirge of Death.

The mountains utmost height they gain,  
 They pour the agonizing prayer;  
 For soon the melancholy train  
 Must leave the sad devoted fair.

Yet PSYCHE chides the tears that fall,  
 E'en in her shroud outmasters fear,  
 Wraps round her beauteous limbs the pall,  
 And dauntless mounts the bridal bier.

## VII.

O SLEEP! sweet friend of humankind,  
 Whose magic chains all joy to wear,  
 Who, soother of the afflicted mind,  
 Strew'st roses on the bed of care;

'Twas thou, o'er PSYCHE's fluttering soul,  
 Benignly shed'st thine opiate charms ;  
 Spell-bound she own'd thy mild controul,  
 Soft cradled in thy downy arms :

Till wafted on young ZEPHYR's wings  
 To a fair vale's sequester'd bowers ;  
 Who the unconscious maiden brings,  
 And lays her on a couch of flowers.

## VIII.

She wakes—and to her glad survey  
 Rise round her, high o'er arching trees,  
 Whose branches gemm'd with blossoms gay,  
 Throw perfumes to the lingering breeze.

And

And shaded from the noon-tide beam,  
There slowly, slowly curling roll'd  
Its silvery waves a lucent stream  
O'er sands of granulated gold.

And in the centre of the wood,  
Not such as kings inhabit here,  
A vast and tower-flank'd palace stood,  
Nor such as mortal hands could rear.

Of ivory was the fretted roof,  
On golden columns proudly rais'd,  
And silver carvings massy proof  
The walls of ebony emblaz'd.

Round lustres wreaths of diamonds fix'd,  
Their prizmy rays profusely pour,  
And amethysts with emeralds mix'd  
Inlaid the tessellated floor.

And

And thus the startled stranger greet,  
 Within no earthly form confin'd,  
 Voices, as distant music sweet,  
 That floats upon the evening wind.

“ Lull to rest this causeless fear ;  
 “ PSYCHE ! thou art mistress here.  
 “ Happy beyond human measure,  
 “ Slake thy thirsting soul in pleasure ;  
 “ Slaves to thy majestic lover,  
 “ Air-form'd sprites around thee hover,  
 “ Ever for thy bidding stay,  
 “ Instant thy commands obey.”

She asks for meat—and quick as thought,  
 The banquet's spread with sumptuous fare,  
 By her aërial servants brought,  
 With bowls of sparkling nectar there.

And

And flute, and harp, and voice, to fill  
The choral harmony unite,  
And make each raptur'd nerve to thrill  
And vibrate with intense delight.

How swift the happy hours are fled !  
For night invites her to repose,  
And on the silk-embroider'd bed  
Her wearied frame the virgin throws.

Now Darkness o'er the silent sphere  
Her raven-tinctur'd reign assumes—  
She stops her breath, she chills to hear  
The rustling sound of fluttering plumes.

Lone, unprotected, and forlorn,  
Her heart beats high with new alarms :  
—And ere breaks forth the golden morn,  
Her wedded husband leaves her arms !

Returning

Returning with departing day,  
 He still eludes the anxious fair,  
 Ere Twilight rises rob'd in gray,  
 And wrings the rain-drops from her hair.

## IX.

Though circling o'er, the laughing hours  
 In still-encreasing raptures roll'd,  
 Oft gleams the path besprent with flowers  
 With tints too bright, too bright to hold!

Thus speaks the INVISIBLE, and sighs,  
 And clasps her in his warm embrace,  
 While the large tear-drops from his eyes  
 Fall humid on her burning face :

“ Life of my beating heart ! o'er thee  
 “ Impending danger scowls : beware !  
 “ With anxious soul I shuddering see  
 “ The cruel fates their lures prepare.

“ Soon shall thy sisters seek thee near,  
“ With loud lament, and piercing wail,  
“ And thou each well known voice shall hear,  
“ Borne fitful on the moaning gale.

“ Then, though thy very soul will yearn  
“ To bid thy messengers convey  
“ The wish'd for visitants ; O turn !  
“ Turn from their plaints thine ear away.

“ If nature's feelings conquer still,  
“ And thou must wayward tempt thy fate,  
“ Thou know'st, obedient to thy will,  
“ What mystic menials round thee wait.

“ Yet as perdition thou wouldst shun,  
“ Or everlasting misery dread,  
“ Our dark mysterious union  
“ Veil in the silence of the dead.

“ For

“ For these the truths the Fates unfold :  
 “ We in these bowers may ever dwell,  
 “ If mortal eye shall ne’er behold  
 “ This form, nor tongue my secrets tell.

“ While from our glad embrace will rise,  
 “ Pure from all taint of earthly leaven,  
 “ An infant inmate of the skies,  
 “ The fairest of the host of heaven.

“ Then spare thyself, thy husband spare,  
 “ And spare thy child, as yet unborn ;  
 “ Dash not the dark clouds of despair  
 “ Upon the ruddy hues of morn.””

## X.

Gaily we launch our little bark,  
 The sunbeams on the waters play,  
 While close behind the ravenous shark  
 Expecting waits his deslin’d prey.

We sail along the whirlpool's brink,  
 Unheeding join the song of glee,  
 But ah! too late aghast we shrink,  
 When whelm'd beneath the treacherous sea.

PSYCHE has heard the warning strain—  
 Resistless wishes restless spring,  
 She flights the strain, and bids her train  
 Of swift-wing'd sprites her sisters bring.

Her childhood's friends she joys to meet,  
 No shade of danger here can find :  
 Though mingled in communion sweet,  
 They cannot found the viewless mind ?

Lock'd in her ever-faithful breast,  
 Her secret all discovery braves,  
 Safe as the orient pearl, will rest,  
 Beneath unfathomable waves.

“ And

“ And who is he whose natal star  
 “ With such peculiar splendor shines,  
 “ Whose treasury thus exceeds so far  
 “ All India’s inexhausted mines?”  
  
 “ O! ’tis a youth whose ruddy cheek  
 “ Vies with the morn’s vermillion dye,  
 “ Or emulates the clouds that streak  
 “ With crimson tints the evening sky.  
  
 “ And mantled he in lively green  
 “ Up the high mountain joys to go,  
 “ Or in the wild-wood chace is seen  
 “ The foremost with his silver bow.”

Homewards the sisters now return,  
 Their bosoms charg’d with deadly hate,  
 And with excessive envy burn,  
 And curse their own inferior fate.

## XI.

Exulting PSYCHE bids again  
 Th' obedient sprites her sisters bear;  
 Borne by the ministering train,  
 Again arrive the baleful pair.

" And who is he whose natal star  
 " With such peculiar splendor shines,  
 " Whose treasury thus exceeds so far  
 " All India's inexhausted mines?"  
  
 " O ! he's a man unbroke by care,  
 " He's hale, and gay, and vigorous yet,  
 " Though here and there a hoary hair  
 " Gleams silvery midst his locks of jet."  
  
 " Cease, cease those fables," then replied  
 One sister with unfeeling scorn,  
 And " cease thy tales," the other cried,  
 " Nor strive to hide thy state forlorn."

" Still

" Still ever erring from the truth,  
 " Guileful thy childish tongue has ran—  
 " Thy husband neither glows with youth,  
 " Nor the gray honors boasts of man ;  
  
 " He wears no human form—we know  
 " Unerring are the words of heaven ;  
 " And of all humankind the foe  
 " Thee for a mate the Gods have given.)  
  
 " We know him well—then wherefore hide  
 " From thy dear sister's love thy care,  
 " Nor to our kindred breasts confide  
 " The ills that thou art doom'd to bear ?"

Then as they wipe the artful tear,  
 Loud on the pitying Gods they call,  
 Till sooth'd by love, or urg'd by fear,  
 The trembling PSYCHE told them all.

" We

" We knew it well !—nay do not start,"  
 The base malignant fury cried,  
 " We know, unhappy girl ! thou art  
 " A vast and venom'd serpent's bride.  
  
 " We learnt it from the neighbouring hinds,  
 " Who every night his form survey,  
 " As through yon chrystral stream he winds  
 " In slimy folds his sinuous way.  
  
 " Or as at day-break he along  
 " In many a spiral volume trails,  
 " And vibrates quick his fork'y tongue,  
 " And glitters in his burnish'd scales.  
  
 " Yes ! though with heaven's own transports warm  
 " Thy foul in boundlefs rapture swims,  
 " Soon coil'd around thy slender form,  
 " He'll writhing crush thy mangled limbs ! "

Thus

Thus the Hyæna speaks and weeps—  
 Cold damps on Psyche's forehead start,  
 Her tingling flesh with horror creeps,  
 The life-blood curdling in her heart.

All ghastly pale her beauteous cheek,  
 She throws her moonstruck gaze around,  
 Utters a feeble, faltering shriek,  
 And senseless sinks upon the ground.

## XII.

As some parch'd up and withering flower  
 Reviving sucks the evening dew,  
 To feel next day the scorching power  
 Of the meridian sun anew ;

So when th' UNKNOWN's distracted wife  
 Recovers her unwelcome breath,  
 She only hails returning life  
 To shudder at approaching death.

The sisters still their schemes pursue,  
 Their vengeance ripens in the bud,  
 And thus they urge her to embrue  
 Her weak and innocent hands in blood.

“ Cut thou the knot the Fates have tied,  
 “ Nor let dismay thine efforts damp,  
 “ But in the figur’d tapestry hide,  
 “ To guide thy stroke, this antique lamp.

“ And take this dagger keen and bright,  
 “ And when his eyes are clos’d in rest,  
 “ Directed by the faithful light,  
 “ Deep plunge it in the monster’s breast.”

Thou who in love’s soft dreams hast felt,  
 Whilst envying Gods were hovering near,  
 Thy soul in sweet delirium melt,  
 Say, canst thou slay thy lover dear?

And

And canst thou spread thy murderous toils  
 For him thy soul's best joy of late ?  
 Ah me ! her fickening heart recoils,  
 Disgusted from her viperous mate.

## XIII.

Her mantle o'er them Darkness throws,  
 On the UNKNOWN soft languors creep, .  
 Who leaves his false one to repose  
 In the more faithful arms of sleep.

Now trembling, now distracted ; bold,  
 And now irresolute she seems ;  
 The blue lamp glimmers in her hold,  
 And in her hand the dagger gleams.

Prepar'd to strike she verges near,  
 The blue light glimmering from above,  
 The HIDEOUS SIGHT expects with fear,  
 —And gazes on the GOD OF LOVE !

Not such a young and frolic child  
 As poets feign, or sculptors plan ;  
 No, no, she fees with transport wild,  
 Eternal beauty veil'd in man.

His cheeks ingrain'd carnation glow'd  
 Like rubies on a bed of pearls,  
 And down his ivory shoulders flow'd  
 In clustering braids his golden curls.

Soft as the cygnet's down his wings,  
 And as the falling snow-flake fair,  
 Each light elastic feather springs,  
 And dances in the balmy air.

The pure and vital stream he breathes,  
 Makes e'en the lamp shine doubly bright,  
 Which its gay flame enamour'd wreathes,  
 And gleams with scintillating light.

There

There loosely strung that bow was hung,  
 Whose twanging cord Immortals fear,  
 And on the floor his quiver flung,  
 Lay, stor'd with many an arrow, near.

Grasp'd in her sacrilegious hands,  
 She with the arrows play'd, and laugh'd—  
 The crimson on her finger stands,  
 She's wounded by the poison'd shaft !

The red blood riots in her veins,  
 Her feverish pulses wildly beat,  
 Whilst every waken'd fibre strains  
 And throbs with palpitating heat.

With eyes, where sparkling rapture swims,  
 She contemplates his sleeping grace,  
 Hangs fondly o'er his well-turn'd limbs,  
 And joins to his her fervid face.

But

But as her views intent to foil,  
 Or as that form it long'd to kiss,  
 Dropt from the lamp the burning oil,  
 Arous'd him from his dreams of blis.

Sudden loud thunders shake the skies,  
 Th' enchanted palace sinks around,  
 And sanguine-streaming fires arise,  
 Meteorous from the trembling ground.

And swift as when in fury hurls  
 Jove's red right arm the forked light,  
 The wounded Godhead eddying whirls  
 Into the heaven of heavens his flight.

## XIV.

In vapoury twilight damp and chill,  
 The languid star fades pale away,  
 The high peak of the distant hill  
 Is gilded by the gleams of day.

And

And who is that distracted fair  
 Reclin'd beneath yon spreading yew,  
 Swoln are her eyes, her dark brown hair  
 Is pearly with the morning dew ?

Her spring of life now seems to flag,  
 In wild delirium now she raves—  
 O ! see, from that o'er-jutting crag  
 She plunges in the foaming waves !

But he who o'er the stream presides  
 The frantic girl in pity bore,  
 As on the billow trim he rides,  
 In safety to th' opposing shore.

There in a bower with wood-moss lin'd,  
 With violets blue, and cowflips gay,  
 Old PAN, by CANN'A's side reclin'd,  
 Sung many a rustic roundelay.

While

While wandering from his heedless eyes,  
 His white goats cropp'd the neighbouring brake,  
 The God in this unfashion'd guise  
 With no ungentle feelings spake :

“ Sweet girl ! though rural is the air  
 “ That I the king of shepherds wear,  
 “ As assay'd silver, tried, and sage,  
 “ And prudent are the words of age.  
 “ Then list, O list, sweet girl to me !  
 “ By my divining power I see,  
 “ Both from thy often-reeling pace,  
 “ And from thy pale and haggard face,  
 “ And from thy deep and frequent sigh,  
 “ While grief hangs heavy on thine eye,  
 “ That all the ills thou'rt doom'd to prove  
 “ Are judgments of the GOD of LOVE.—  
 “ Then list, O list, sweet girl to me,  
 “ Seek not by death thy soul to free,

But

“ But cast thy cares, thy griefs away,  
 “ To CUPID without ceasing pray,  
 “ And soon that soft luxurious boy  
 “ Will tune anew thy mind to Joy.”\*

## XV.

The shipman seeks his native vales,  
 He's come afar from o'er the sea,  
 He longs to tell his wond'rous tales  
 Of dangers on the stormy lee.

He'll tell the wonder-stirring tales  
 To those dear friends he left behind—  
 Ah me ! within his native vales  
 His sickening soul no friend can find.

Thus PSYCHE to one sister goes,  
 That sister's vital spark is fled :  
 To meet the other next she rose,  
 But she is numbered with the dead.

And she will seek her father's State,  
 And there her parents' blessings crave—  
 Press'd by the heavy hand of fate,  
 They too rest peaceful in the grave !

## XVI.

And now the milk-white Albatross,  
 To VENUS, who in Ocean laves  
 Circled with Sea-nymphs, scuds across  
 On oary wings the rippling waves.

“ Great queen,” the feather'd chatterer said,  
 “ Know'st thou not what thy hopeful son,  
 “ Enamour'd of a worthless maid,  
 “ Has in his amorous folly done?  
  
 “ No Nymph, no Muse thy boy adores,  
 “ No Grace, no Goddess is his flame,  
 “ His love he on a mortal pours,  
 “ And PSYCHE is the damsel's name.

“ And

“ And groaning now within thy fane,  
 “ In anguish penitent lies he,  
 “ For he too late has felt the bane  
 “ Of female curiosity.”

VENUS ascends her golden car,  
 Arch'd moon-like, starr'd with many a gem,  
 Four snow-white doves she calls from far,  
 And throws the filken yoke o'er them.

Round her, her sparrows chirping play,  
 Exulting strain their little throats,  
 And all the warblers of the spray  
 Pour sweetly their mellifluous notes.

She cuts the clouds, she skims the heaven,  
 Till, reach'd the palace of the sky,  
 Her fanciful behest is given  
 To the wing'd herald MERCURY.

“ Take thou this volume in thy hand  
 “ With PSYCHE’s history mark’d, and name,  
 “ And thus in every clime and land,  
 “ And every state aloud proclaim.  
  
 “ If any man shall seize and bring  
 “ The flying daughter of a king,  
 “ Handmaid of VENUS, or will tell  
 “ Where PSYCHE now conceal’d may dwell,  
 “ Let him to Murtia repair,  
 “ Make the much wish’d discovery there,  
 “ And CYTHEREA, queen of charms,  
 “ Sole sovereign of extatic blisses,  
 “ Will clasp him in her grateful arms,  
 “ And greet him with seven fervid kisses ! ”

## XVII.

Now four long tedious moons are spent,  
 She hears no tidings of her lord,  
 Yet still her wandering steps are bent  
 In search of him her soul ador’d.

She

She pray'd at CERES' corn-wreath'd shrine,  
 And JUNO's altar deck'd with flowers,  
 But sternly bound by pact divine,  
 No succour lend the pitying powers.

Till wearied with unnumber'd woes,  
 And render'd valiant by despair,  
 She to the Murtian temple goes—  
 Perchance her true love tarries there.

The ancient priestess saw well pleas'd,  
 The victim so long vainly sought,  
 By her dishevell'd tresses seiz'd,  
 And trembling to the Goddess brought.

Then laughing VENUS bids with speed,  
 Her handmaids on the pavement throw  
 Of all the flowering plants the seed  
 That in the Hesperian gardens blow.

And

And she must sort them all before  
 The dewfall shall the damp grass steep,  
 While sentry at the chamber door  
 SOLICITUDE and SORROW keep.

A little ant the mandate heard,  
 The oppressive mandate with disdain ;  
 For e'en the weakest 'tis averr'd  
 Will on the oppressor turn again.

And insect myriads never ceas'd  
 Their labors 'till the setting sun,  
 When VENUS rising from the feast,  
 With wonder saw her hard task done.

### XVIII.

Now rose, in glory rose, the morn,  
 And VENUS bids her captive go  
 To yon fair stream whose currents, borne  
 In circling eddies, babbling flow.

“ There

“ There grazing the wild sheep,” she cried,  
 “ With golden fleeces shalt thou see,  
 “ Then from the bright ram’s shaggy side,  
 “ The precious wool bring back to me.”

Trembling she goes—she gazes round,—  
 Say, whence that heavenly voice proceeds,  
 That like the soft flutes mellow sound  
 Breathes sweetly through the whispering reeds?

“ Fierce while glares the noon-day sun  
 “ Thou the dread adventure shun,  
 “ While the ram his rival scorns  
 “ Furious with his jutting horns;  
 “ But beneath yon plane tree’s shade  
 “ In concealment be thou laid,  
 “ Till the eve-star pale and fair  
 “ Glimmers through the misty air;  
 “ Then in safety may’st thou pull  
 “ From his fleece the golden wool.”

Yet though this labor she performs,  
 No grace with VENUS can she find,  
 Her stony heart no pity warms,  
 Another trial waits behind.

## XIX.

“ Down from that cloud-capt mountain’s brow,  
 “ A never-ceasing cataract pours,  
 “ Whose feathery surges dash below  
 “ In thunder on the Stygian shores ;  
  
 “ Thou on the dangerous brink must stand,  
 “ And dip this goblet in the spring :  
 “ Descending then with steady hand  
 “ The black transparent chrystal bring.”

Nimbly the mountain steep she’d climb  
 But thence impervious rocks arise,  
 Whose awful foreheads frown sublime,  
 And lift their bold crags to the skies.

While

While horrid voices howl around,  
 “ Fly ! swiftly fly !”—“ Forbear, forbear !”  
 Vast stones, with heart-appalling sound,  
 Are hurl’d into the groaning air.

And on the right, and on the left,  
 Four ever-watchful dragons fly,  
 Flame-breathing through each dizzy cleft,  
 Their long and flexible necks they ply.

Though beauty’s queen no pity feels,  
 The bold rapacious bird of Jove  
 His succour to the afflicted deals,  
 In reverence to the God of Love.

He sees her blasted hopes expire,  
 He leaves the liquid fields of light,  
 And whirling round in many a gyre  
 Majestic wings his rapid flight.

High o'er the dragons he will tower,  
 Updarting through the azure air,  
 And high above the stony shower  
 The bowl his crooked talons bear.

Now to the grateful maid he brings  
 The sparkling waters bright and clear,  
 Then spreads again his ample wings,  
 And soaring quits this nether sphere.

## XX.

Can beauty no compassion know ?  
 Sure Mercy must her bright beams dart,  
 And piercing through those hills of snow,  
 Melt e'en the adamantine heart !

Ah no ! by VENUS' stern command  
 PSYCHE to PROSERPINE is sped :  
 Shivering she seeks the dreary land,  
 The sun-less mansions of the dead.

Th' unopen'd casket she must bring,  
 Whose weak and fragile sides entomb  
 From beauty's uncreated spring  
 The essence of eternal bloom.

Fearful and sad she journey'd on,  
 While silence rul'd the midnight hour,  
 To where th' unsteady moon-beam shone  
 Reflected from a ruin'd tower.

And thence she heard these warning notes  
 Caroll'd as clear as clear might be,  
 Sweet as the mermaid's lay that floats  
 Melodious on the charmed sea.

" Sunk her spirit, whelm'd in woe,  
 " Does the royal captive go ?  
 " Does her heart, oppress'd with dread,  
 " Shudder to approach the dead ?

“ Where the cavern yawns around,  
“ Enter there the dark profound :  
“ Soon thy path a crippled ass,  
“ By a cripple led, shall pass,  
“ Fainting they beneath their task—  
“ He assistance oft will ask,  
“ But in these infernal lands  
“ Touch not with unhallow'd hands,  
“ Cautious thou, without delay  
“ Onward, onward, speed thy way !  
“ In old CHARON's creaking boat,  
“ O'er the dead stream thou must float ;  
“ There the livid corse thou'l see  
“ Stretch his blue-swoln hand to thee,  
“ Frown thou on his suit severe,  
“ Mercy were destruction here !  
“ See those crones that on the left  
“ Weave the many-colour'd weft,  
“ See them, how they this way wend  
“ Asking thee thy aid to lend,

But

“ But in these infernal lands  
“ Touch not with unhallow’d hands,  
“ Cautious thou, without delay  
“ Onward, onward, speed thy way !  
“ Dipt the sop in Hydromel  
“ Charm the three-neck’d dog of Hell ;  
“ Then from her imperial seat  
“ Thee the shadowy queen shall greet,  
“ Shall for thee the feast prepare—  
“ Thou that feast refuse to share,  
“ But upon the pavement spread  
“ Take the black and mouldy bread—  
“ By the queen soon set at large,  
“ Back now bear thy precious charge :  
“ Over all, thy curious mind  
“ In the chains of prudence bind,  
“ Nor the strict command infringe,  
“ Move not thou the golden hinge !  
“ Gladsome then without delay  
“ Onward, onward, speed thy way !”

## XXI.

—She' has seen the secrets of the deep,  
 And through o'er-whelming horrors past,  
 How her recovering pulses leap,  
 To hail the day-star's gleams at last !

“ Do I then bear eternal bloom  
 “ Alone to make my tyrant shine ?  
 “ No rather let its tints illume  
 “ These wan and woe-worn cheeks of mine :

“ And I will revel in the rays  
 “ Of beauty in the casket hid.”—  
 Alas ! no beam of beauty plays  
 Delightful from the lifted lid !

But from the empty casket sprang  
 Of Stygian fogs the baleful breath,  
 And heavy o'er her blanch'd frame hang  
 The damp unwholesome dews of Death.

## XXII.

## XXII.

The fields of nature to deform

Not always drives the furious blast,  
And shall Misfortune's moral storm,  
Meek Virtue's sufferings, ever last?

CUPID, with downcast, humbled mien,

Has to the THUNDERER breath'd his care,  
Th' almighty Father smil'd serene,  
And granted his adorer's prayer.

Now flies he joyful to her aid,

He gently rais'd her falling head,  
With his bright arrow touch'd the maid,  
And rous'd her from her cheerless bed.

He animates anew her charms,

Warm o'er her breathes the light of love,  
Then bears her in his circling arms,  
And stands before the throne of JOVE.

But

But on the Sovereign of the skies  
 What fleshly optics dare to gaze?  
 And PSYCHE with averted eyes  
 Shrinks trembling from th' excessive blaze:

'Till, HEBE raising to her lips  
 Th' ambrosial Goblet foaming high,  
 Wrapt in extatic trance she sips  
 The fount of IMMORTALITY!

Purpled with roses dancè the Hours,  
 The Graces scattering odours play,  
 And crown'd with never-fading flowers  
 The Muses hymn the jocund lay.

And soon to bless the faithful pair,  
 A little daughter smiling came,  
 Belov'd by all, divinely fair,  
 And PLEASURE was the infant's name.

Finis.

